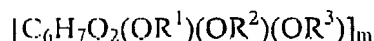
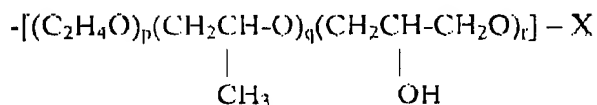


CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Previously Presented) A water-soluble ionic cellulose ether comprising a hydroxyalkylcellulose having on average from 0.001 to 1.0 alkyl group per anhydroglucose unit substitutions and from 0.01 to 0.1 sulfoalkyl group per anhydroglucose unit, wherein the degree of hydroxyalkylation is greater than 2.3, made in accordance with the process of claim 7.
2. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 7, wherein the average number of alkyl groups per anhydroglucose unit is from 0.001 to 0.2.
3. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 7, wherein the cellulose ether is of the formula



where $C_6H_7O_2$ is an anhydroglucose unit,
 m is 50-3000
 and R^1, R^2, R^3 independently of one another are each a polyalkylene oxide chain of the formula



where $X = H, C_nH_{2n+1}, C_nH_{2n+1}O, CH_2-CH_2-SO_3Y$ or $CH_2-CHOH-CH_2SO_3Y$,
 $n = 4 - 20$
 and $Y = H, Na$ or K ,
 and in which

p, q , and r independently of one another in R^1, R^2 , and R^3 can each independently assume values from 0 to 4, the sum of all ($p + q + r$) added over R^1, R^2 , and R^3 per

anhydroglucose unit is on average greater than 1.3 and less than 4.5, the sequence of the oxyalkylene units in the polyalkylene oxide chain is arbitrary, and the average number of alkyl ~~modified~~ groups per anhydroglucose unit (DS HM) is from 0.001 to 0.2, and the average number of sulfoalkyl groups per anhydroglucose unit is from 0.01 to 0.1.

4. **(Currently Amended)** The process as claimed in claim 7, wherein the average number of alkyl ~~modified~~ groups per anhydroglucose unit (DS HM) is from 0.01 to 0.04.

5. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 7, wherein the average number of sulfoalkyl groups per anhydroglucose unit is from 0.01 to 0.09.

6. (Previously Presented) The process as claimed in claim 7, wherein the sulfoalkyl groups are sulfoethyl groups.

7. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing a cellulose ether comprising the steps of etherifying cellulose with an etherifying agent from the group of alkylene oxides and etherifying with a C₁₂ or C₁₅₋₁₇ alkyl glycidyl ether and a sulfonate, with base catalysis to form a hydroxyalkylcellulose having on average from 0.001 to 1.0 alkyl group per anhydroglucose unit substitutions and from 0.01 to 0.1 sulfoalkyl group per anhydroglucose unit, wherein the degree of hydroxyalkylation is greater than 2.3.

8. (Previously Presented) A process for preparing a cellulose ether comprising the steps of etherifying cellulose ethers from the group of hydroxyalkylcelluloses with a C₁₂ or C₁₅₋₁₇ alkyl glycidyl ether and a sulfonate, with base catalysis.

9. (Cancelled)

10. (Cancelled)